United Nations

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council, in three meetings last night, issues statements on Nagorno-Karabakh, Mozambique and Angola; Council to meet tomorrow morning on Secretary-General's "An Agenda for Peace" report.

+ Five new non-permanent members of Security Council -- Brazil, Djibouti, Pakistan, New Zealand and Spain -- elected by General Assembly to serve two-year terms beginning on 1 January 1993; Assembly adopts resolution reaffirming sovereignty of Comoros over Island of Mayotte.

+ World Bank approves $20 million grant for famine relief in Somalia; United Nations official says total number of authorized security personnel in that country will be 4,219 to be deployed in three stages.

+ General Assembly considers 35-power draft on need for enhanced cooperation between United Nations and Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).

+ Chairman of Special Committee Against Apartheid condemns "senseless killing" in South Africa, urges leaders "to spare no effort" to find ways to curtail spiralling violence.

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The Security Council, in three consecutive meetings last night, heard statements read out on its behalf by Council President Jean-Bernard Merimée (France) on the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, Mozambique and Angola, respectively.

In its statement on Nagorno-Karabakh, the Council appealed for the immediate convening of the Minsk Conference in the framework of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and for the beginning of political negotiations for a comprehensive settlement. It also appealed for the immediate implementation of the cease-fire agreement reached at Sochi, Russia, on 21 September. The Council further welcomed the Secretary-General's decision to send a representative to the region to examine what contributions the United Nations could make in support of the efforts of the CSCE.

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The move follows a charge by Azerbaijan that Armenia's recent request to the Secretary-General for his designation of a Special Representative for Nagorno-Karabakh and for the deployment of United Nations observers there could shift the negotiation process into a new framework and thereby delay the peace process.

In a second meeting last night, the members of the Council expressed deep concern about major violations of the cease-fire in Mozambique and called for scrupulous respect for all commitments under the General Peace Agreement, signed on 4 October by the Mozambican Government and the Mozambique National Resistence Movement (RENAMO). The Council indicated that full respect for the cease-fire was necessary for the successful deployment of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique.

The Council on 12 October approved the appointment of an interim Special Representative for Mozambique and the dispatch to that country of a 25-member team of military observers. The cease-fire was expected to have entered into force on 15 October.

In its final meeting last night, Council President Merimée read out a statement urging the leaders of the two parties in Angola to engage in dialogue without delay, so as to enable the second round of the presidential elections to be held. Expressing concern about the deteriorating political situation in the country, the statement warned that it would hold responsible the party which refused to open such dialogue, thus jeopardizing the entire process. It called on the parties "to refrain from any act which might heighten tension, impair the conduct of the electoral process and threaten the territorial integrity of Angola".

By the statement, the Council reiterated its full support for the Secretary-General's Special Representative and for the United Nations Verification Mission (UNAVEM II) and condemned recent attacks against them by the radio service of the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). It also reiterated its readiness to act without delay on the basis of recommendations that the Secretary-General might make concerning the United Nation's contribution to the completion of the electoral process.

The Council was holding consultations this afternoon on the situation in Western Sahara. It was announced following those consultations that the Council would meet tomorrow morning on the Secretary-General's "An Agenda for Peace" report.

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The General Assembly yesterday evening elected five new non-permanent members of the Security Council -- Brazil, Djibouti, Pakistan, New Zealand and Spain. They will serve two-year terms beginning on 1 January 1993, replacing India, Zimbabwe, Ecuador, Austria and Belgium. The Assembly selected the five from six candidates, the one not selected being Sweden.

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In other action, the Assembly reaffirmed the sovereignty of the Comoros over the Island of Mayotte, by adopting a resolution introduced by the Comoros. It called for the French President to put into practice the wish he had expressed "actively to seek a just solution to the question of Mayotte".

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The World Bank has approved a $20 million grant in support of the United Nations 100-Day Action Programme for Accelerated Humanitarian Assistance for the People of Somalia, in response to a recent appeal made by the United Nations for financial assistance to that programme.

At a press conference today, Jan Eliasson, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, and Francis Colaso, Director of the East African Department at the World Bank, briefed correspondents on the grant, which is intended primarily for non-food assistance. It would also cover the cost of transportation and logistics for delivering of emergency food and desperately needed medical supplies to people in famine-stricken areas of Somalia and to Somali refugees in Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya.

Describing the grant as exceptional, Mr. Colaso said the World Bank -- neither a peace-keeping nor a relief organization -- could not use its traditional instruments of loans and credits to help with the situation in Somalia, as there was no recognized government in that country. The grants were made in support of a general appeal by the United Nations and would be disbursed by United Nations agencies, he said.

Welcoming the World Bank's decision, Under-Secretary-General Eliasson noted that it reflected growing cooperation between the United Nations and the World Bank.

In a related development, a United Nations official said today that the total authorized number of security personnel in Somalia would be 4,219, including the 50 United Nations observers and 500 Pakistani troops who were already in Somalia. The deployment of that operation -- known as United Nations Observer Mission in Somalia (UNOSOM) -- would occur in three stages, beginning with a reconnaissance party to Somalia, which would be followed ten days later by an advance party of troops. The last stage would be the deployment of the remaining troops.

Last night, the Permanent Representative of Cape Verde to the United Nations, José Luis Jesus, told correpondents that he had asked Council members during consultations that measures be taken for the prompt deployment of the 3,000 UNOSOM security guards mandated by the Council in July. He said Council members were discussing whether to launch a different kind of United Nations involvement in Somalia because of the lack of governmental and administrative structure in that country -- perhaps an operation like the one in Cambodia.

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Without cooperation and coordination, the activities of the United Nations and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) could be counterproductive, Jaroslav Suchanek, First Deputy Foreign Minister of Czechoslovakia, told the General Assembly this morning, as he introduced the 42-power draft resolution on enhanced cooperation between the two organizations. Speaking as the representative of a country that would divide into two separate States as of 1 January 1993, he pointed out that the United Nations and the CSCE dealt with different aspects of the same problems. Without clearer and closer relations, those efforts could be compromised.

The question of interaction between the different international bodies had acquired a new dimension after the Helsinki Summit, when Heads of State and Government declared their understanding that CSCE was a regional arrangement in the sense of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. As such, he said, it provided an important link between European and global security. A lasting and peaceeful order would be built on mutually reinforcing institutions, each with its own area of action and responsibility.

The discussion on cooperation between the United Nations and CSCE was at the initial stage of exchanges of ideas, he said. Those ideas might be reflected in a report of the Secretary-General at the next General Assembly session, as indicated in the resolution.

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In a statement issued today, the Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid, Ibrahim A. Gambari (Nigeria), said that the Committee was deeply distressed by the news of the "senseless killing" of more than 20 members of the Inkatha Freedom Party at a religious gathering in the Folwani area in Natal on 25 October. They also recalled with sadness the attacks earlier this month in the same area, which took the lives of eight members of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), as well as the killing of regional ANC leader, Reggie Hadebe, in an ambush on 26 October.

"The lives lost as a result of this spiral of violence in South Africa have now reached the staggering level of more than 6,000 in the last two years," he said. "The level of violence has seriously undermined all efforts to resume the negotiation process."

While reiterating that it was the primary duty of the South African authorities to protect the lives and property of all South Africans, the Special Committee stressed the importance of the early resumption of the peace process. It appealed to all the parties to exercise maximum restraint and refrain from acts that could evoke further death and destruction. In particular, the Special Committee urged the political leaders most directly affected by the violence to meet without delay and "to spare no effort in finding ways agreeable to all for curtailing this unfortunate development".

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